



June 29, 2006

Dear Representative

On behalf of the United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices in the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry, I urge you to support the Deep Ocean Energy Resources Act, H.R. 4761. The failure of the U.S. government to allow responsible energy exploration on the Outer Continental Shelf has created devastating economic conditions that are just now coming to fruition. This is affront to every American worker, especially those in the pipe trades, who will continue to watch more jobs and industries, move overseas because we refuse to develop our own resources.

Reducing our dependence on foreign energy by creating thousands of new jobs in the U.S. is a bipartisan issue. The Building Trades and affiliates, like the UA, have been working with both sides to insure that these job opportunities go to American workers first, and that the revenue generated by energy development goes back into training the next generation of skilled pipe tradesmen and other energy-related workers.

The skills and technology have come a long way in the past 30 years due to heightened environmental awareness. Do not believe those who say we cannot develop our energy safely. Since 1980 the spill rate for offshore drilling is .001%, and accounts for less than 2% of the petroleum in the ocean, whereas natural seepages account for 63%.

We should not abandon alternative energy sources or conservation, but we will be dependent on oil and natural gas for another century. We already produce roughly as much ethanol per capita as Brazil; they have

secured their energy independence through off-shore drilling, and yet their beaches are still dream destinations for most of the world.

The U.S. now faces the highest natural gas prices in the world, and sends millions of dollars a day to unstable regions of the world to bring in the oil and natural gas that sit just on the edge of our own horizon. If we continue to lose paper mills and chemical and fertilizer plants due to high natural gas prices, good paying union jobs will disappear. Instead we can take a productive step to secure our economic future by creating good paying jobs for American workers on our Outer Continental Shelf.

For the 350,000 members of the UA, who work on offshore rigs, pipelines, power stations, refineries, and in numerous facilities that are downstream consumers of oil and natural gas, this bill will create jobs, and keep money in the U.S. economy. By doing nothing, we are choosing to jeopardize our whole economy and put millions of American jobs at risk.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William P. Hite". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

William P. Hite
General President

WPH:paw